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THE STATUS OF THE WORK FOR THE BLIND IN MINNESOTA

Jos. E. Vance, Superintendent Minnesota School for the Blind

Blindness has ever been an affliction visited upon all the peoples of the earth in varying degree, depending largely upon social and economic conditions. The earliest recorded history refers to it in a resigned manner, as a condition to be endured with no thought of alleviation or prevention. This great affliction was rather regarded as a visitation of the wrath of an avenging God. Indeed it has been less than a century and a half since any formal or unified effort was made to train those afflicted with blindness to enable them to take a respected place in society and become self-respecting citizens. Even today the general public is still so unfamiliar with those people without vision that it looks upon them as a class apart, with no hope of a higher and better station in society.

We wish to take as our thesis that with proper and adequate training, both academic and vocational, the blind person can and will be prepared to take his place in society with credit to himself and to the state. This thought was in the mind of Valentin Haüy, the Frenchman, when about 1771 he recognized that there was need for intelligent direction of the blind in their efforts to make a respected living by their own minds and hands. Accordingly he started a school about fifteen years later, having been inspired by the work begun by de l'Epee for the deaf a few years previous to this time. Both Haüy's efforts in behalf of the blind and those of de l'Epee for the deaf were no doubt due to the intellectual upheaval and original thinking of the time of such men as Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau.

To Haüy must go the credit for the introduction of embossed printing. This system of printing, however, was superseded fifty years later by a system of writing called "braille," after its inventor, Louis Braille, a French blind lad of sixteen years. This method of writing by the blind consisted of a combination of six dots or points and is now in universal use throughout the civilized world.

About the time of the invention of the braille system there appeared the need of training blind youth in the more thickly settled portions of America. This need was soon recognized by Dr. Samuel G. Howe who went to visit those schools of Europe which had but recently been established. Dr. Howe brought back from the European schools many ideas as a result of his observations. The best of these ideas were inaugurated at the Perkins Institution for the Blind in South Boston.

A few years later Charles Dickens, while visiting America, marvelled at the beneficial results of the training of the blind and in his American Notes describes graphically the changed life of Laura Bridgman, both blind and deaf, as a result of her training at the Perkins Institution.

From this beginning in America, about 1830, schools for the blind grew in number as the population increased in the eastern states and as the west opened up great possibilities for settlement. In a comparatively short time

with excellent environmental conditions often produces better results than a good heredity with poor environmental conditions. Of course no sort of environment can do more than bring out hereditary possibilities, but as Dr. Higgins said this morning, those possibilities remain latent and undeveloped unless they are stimulated into activity by the environment.

Then Professor Conklin cites the parable of the talents as expressing a profound biological truth. Men differ in hereditary endowments. One receives ten talents; another receives but one; but the used talent increases manyfold; the unused remains unchanged and undeveloped; and although we may not be able to increase our inheritance, we may greatly improve that which we have.



the tide of emigration reached beyond the Mississippi, and it became apparent, even in the sparsely settled state of Minnesota, that some provision should be made for the training and education of the blind youth within its confines. Accordingly in the year 1866 the first step was taken toward the training of the blind youth in Minnesota. Four pupils were enrolled in the year 1866. On account of the very small number of blind youth in the state they were placed with the group of deaf youth under one roof in an old frame building in Faribault. The first teacher in the department of the blind was Miss Harriet N. Tucker, who continued in the work seven years. She was followed by A. N. Pratt, who served one year. The growth of the school was very gradual and the first graduation exercises were held in the year 1873, with four graduates in the class. Since then 115 students out of a total of 700 enrolled, about 16 per cent, have completed the prescribed course. This percentage of graduates of the number enrolled compares very favorably with the per cent of graduates of the number enrolled in the public schools.

At the close of the Civil War there returned home one of the sons of Minnesota who had served his country with honor, James J. Dow, who, after finishing his college training, became at once interested in the education of the blind youth of Minnesota. In 1874 the schools were separated, and the Minnesota School for the Blind had its birth, with James J. Dow as the first superintendent.

Dr. Dow laid out the course of study to suit the needs of the blind according to the best and most advanced thought of the times, dividing it into three main divisions; viz: Academic, Music and Industrial. In the academic department the course includes the work of the eight grades and of a four-year high school course, with an additional year for those especially talented in music. Graduates are prepared to do creditable work in college by the aid of a reader. An added feature of the academic work of the school is that of the sight-saving classes. Under the law recently passed providing for special aid for conducting classes for the education of the blind and partially-sighted pupils in cities with sufficiently large numbers of such pupils to organize classes, these pupils may be cared for. However, throughout the state of Minnesota there are also such pupils, but they are so widely scattered in rural districts and small towns that it is impossible, either legally or from the standpoint of efficient training, to furnish for them equal educational opportunities with the normally-sighted children to which they are entitled. Recognizing the existence of these conditions in the state, a room with especially adapted equipment, including large-type books and adjustable desks, was opened last year for the instruction of such pupils as have so small a degree of vision as to render them unable to do satisfactory work in the public schools. No doubt many pupils with low vision attempting to do the regularly required work in the public schools and failing to make the grade have become discouraged, sometimes condemned by the teacher as a dullard, have dropped out of school to lead idle and shiftless lives, and in many cases have become state or county liabilities. These pupils, with equal school opportunities, might well be saved to useful lives and citizenship.

There is a common belief that the blind are musically gifted by nature. A great deal of effort and much money are frequently employed in an endeavor to make finished musicians of blind persons with ordinary or with very little talent. This belief probably grows out of the fact that the first really intelligent efforts toward the education of the blind took the direction largely of musical training. A large number of blind men and women have made places for themselves in music, a few having achieved some distinction as performers, teachers, or composers. It has, therefore, become almost traditional that a school for the blind of standing must have in its curriculum a prominent place for music. Due to the efforts of Louis Braille who, in addition to his system of reading, invented a musical notation, a considerable amount of music is available for the instruction of the blind. The work in music covers a period corresponding to the length of time in the academic subjects, if the pupil possesses some degree of talent.

There is still a question of the vocational value of music to the blind except in very isolated cases. Musical training is furnished to many blind students with no real hope of any financial return to them being possible. Many of them profit by musical education only to the extent of what pleasure they themselves receive from its rendition and from the entertainment of others. On the whole, perhaps, in schools for the blind, so much attention has been directed toward the rendition of classical music that the theory and history of music have been somewhat neglected. As a rule, I believe little or no effort has been made toward a normal course for those who have musical talent and ability to teach music as a vocation. It is my belief that very little financial return will ever be realized (by the blind students of music unless it be in the field of teaching music or that of popular entertainment. It is entirely possible to teach a blind child to play a rather difficult selection of music well, from the standpoint of technique, without much, if any, understanding of the harmony or phrasing of the piece. Without careful supervision and much thoughtful but kind criticism the performer may easily develop a purely mechanical style.

I would then suggest that more stress be laid upon musical theory, harmony and history of music, even to the omission, if necessary, of some of the time and effort used in the long and tedious study of the classical music. I would not be misunderstood by this suggestion. My thought is to have a better balanced program of music, including along with the study of the classics a thorough course in the theory of music, together with a normal course for those desiring to teach.

The third department into which the work of the school for the blind is divided, but which is not the least in importance, is that of the industrial or vocational. Although it be possible for the blind person to approximate the accomplishments of the seeing person in academic and musical lines, I think it will generally be conceded that he is much more seriously handicapped in most of the vocations. It must also be said that as we progress in the industries the handicap of blindness is more keenly felt in competition with modern methods of the business world. Yet in large industrial centers there are opportunities for the blind to secure positions in factories in certain kinds of piece work involving simple uniform opera-

tions, but for the blind in rural and small town communities the chance for employment is limited in practically all cases to individual projects. For their own happiness it is essential that these blind people living in the rural districts, deprived as they are of any appreciable degree of social intercourse, be employed at some kind of work.

It is not advisable either from a social or economic standpoint to segregate these people in large centers. The cities already have a large problem to deal with in their efforts to ameliorate the conditions as they find them among the sightless. Neither is it wise to admit to the regular school the adult blind. The experiment of admitting blind adults to regular schools for blind youth has been tried in many schools and without exception the experiment ended in complete failure. It has been found by every school that has tried the experiment that, as a very general rule, the adult blind are not amenable to the necessary discipline of the regular school and in many cases their influence proved to be harmful to blind youth. In all of the oldest schools for the blind in the East they discontinued the practice long since, after disastrous results. Notwithstanding these discouraging experiences it has been and is recognized that these adults need training to make of them more useful and contented citizens.

With the thought in mind of providing training for these adult blind, that they might enjoy a larger degree of happiness and become somewhat independent financially, Dr. Dow conceived the idea of establishing a summer school for adult men and women. This movement was inaugurated in the Minnesota School for the Blind in 1907. At the time the plan attracted wide attention throughout the United States among the workers for the blind, because no provision had been made for the training of adult blind in rural and small town districts except as they could be reached in their homes by traveling teachers. By many the summer school was even regarded as revolutionary in its conception, but it has filled a demand from the blind adults recently losing sight for a chance to learn to do something to relieve the monotony of their lives. Imperfect as the work in the summer school may be, it is, in my opinion, the most effective way and probably the most economic method of providing training for blind adults. There these blind people have the advantage of intensive training under the direction of capable and experienced teachers of the blind who have every facility at hand as to apparatus and materials. It is urged by some that the segregation of the blind adults in a summer school affords an opportunity for the agitator to do effective work in spreading propaganda. The agitator and those blind persons who hold the theory that the "state owes them a living" will not be curbed by isolation. This question resolves itself into the problem of deciding which is the more important, the thorough training of the blind adult to enable him to do something for himself and thereby become happier and more independent and therefore a better citizen, or to keep him isolated with not much, if any, opportunity for training in fear of the influence to which he may be subjected by coming in contact with an occasional undesirable citizen. In his own community, wherever he may be located, he will not need to go far to come under the baneful influence of the false sympathizer and agitator. It may well be admitted

that, if it were possible, it would be better not to segregate blind adults in an institution, but to my way of thinking the quality of the training would suffer. It is true that upon occasional visits to the home something could be accomplished in teaching reading and writing and such simple hand work as would not involve any sizable apparatus or bulky materials. It would be practically impossible to teach broom-making, piano-tuning or weaving in the home, first on account of the lack of shop facilities and room, and second because of the impossibility of necessary daily supervision in the early stages of the instruction. Again what opportunity have we to secure the services of a person, either with or without vision, who is competent to teach a given man in one town piano-tuning, and in the next broom-making, and in the next weaving, and so on down the list? This would be manifestly impossible. Many blind persons could be secured who would be able, with the aid of a guide, to travel from home to home and teach reading and writing of braille, basketry and sewing and perhaps an occasional music lesson. Then in the hand work in the isolated home what would be the standard of work and who would be capable of judging among those in the home who are unfamiliar with the possibilities of the blind worker under proper conditions and supervision? In practically all kinds of training of the blind special and rather unusual equipment is required. This equipment is too expensive to purchase for individuals to experiment with.

Occasionally experienced workers for the sightless are asked why some new vocations are not taught in order to break away from the "traditional trades" which have for so long been the only avenues for the blind worker. Workers for and teachers of the blind are and have been ready with open arms to welcome suggestions of new courses of training that will "work." At the close of the World War was the great opportunity for experimentation on new and untried courses for the blind without limit. The work of training the blind ex-service men was taken over by an organization with no limitation as to finances to be used in this work. This organization left no stone unturned in its search for progressive and aggressive men and women to carry on the work. Those in authority said they were determined to keep away from the "traditional trades" and to inaugurate a new era in training the blind. Industrial engineers and experts in diverse lines of business were employed and given much latitude in promulgating their ideas with reference to the new methods of training the blind. The result was that courses were laid out in auto repair and vulcanizing, cigar making poultry raising, massage, store keeping, book binding, dictaphone operating and music as a vocation. These were the new vocations to be taught. Several of these courses were discontinued because they were not practical for a blind man to learn and in some cases quite impossible. While some of these courses were continued, graduates found it almost impossible to find employment, and others found that too much capital was required to start the business for which they had been trained. It was found finally, as men returned for more training, that they almost invariably took up what had been referred to as the "traditional trades"; such as basketry, rug weaving, etc. These were the courses that persisted to the final clos-

ing of the Evergreen School for the Blind, the institution located at Baltimore, where our blind ex-service men were trained.

The criticism is also heard that summer school encourages men to become institutionalized. It is true that there are those in the state who would continue to attend the sessions for an indefinite time, if a limit were not placed on the number of sessions to which they are eligible. However, knowing as they do that there is a limit of four summer sessions, the men improve every opportunity and work faithfully. Among the few states that have followed Minnesota in establishing summer schools for the adult blind there is at least one that sets no limit on the number of sessions a student may attend. There is therefore no incentive for the man in question to make the most of his time, feeling that he may continue to attend session after session. This, I feel, is a very great mistake, as it tends to institutionalize and to stifle the ambition of those who might otherwise apply themselves with energy to complete the course. Frequently men recently blinded have come to the summer school without hope in the future and have gone away filled with ambition to make the fight, on account of having come in contact with others of like affliction who had inspired them with faith in the possibilities of blind men. This renewed outlook on life has resulted in the saving of many blind men to useful citizenship. They have gone out with the determination to be more self-reliant and to become independent so far as possible.

To Dr. J. J. Dow, who conceived the idea of the summer school, is due the sincere thanks from the adults of Minnesota. The summer school for adult blind in my opinion was the outstanding achievement among the many advanced ideas coming from the fertile mind of Dr. Dow. I quote here a very clear statement made by Dr. Dow setting forth a part of his argument for the establishment of the summer school.

"It is the aim of this plan to do for blind men, so far as time and conditions permit, the same service which many of the methods elsewhere pursued are seeking to accomplish. It will take the place of the training departments of homes for blind adults; it will provide, as it seems to me, more adequately, the instruction which is given by visiting teachers; and, most important of all, it will open the door of hope and opportunity for lack of which so many blind men brood in bitterness and misery. If his efforts prove inadequate or less adequate than he has hoped, he has had his opportunity, and while he may fully realize the difficulties of his condition, he will no longer feel that they exist because he is denied an opportunity to remove them.

"Only those who have come into close contact through long and sympathetic acquaintance with blind men can even begin to appreciate the helplessness and hopelessness of the situation which confronts them on first losing sight. It is an absolutely new world to them. They have no knowledge of the means of adapting themselves to it, and everything which ingenuity and sympathy has devised for aiding and ameliorating their condition must be discovered by them alone and unaided. It is no wonder that the magnitude of the past proves too much for them and that they sink too often into apathy, if not indifference. The plan proposed brings

together men united by the bond of a common affliction. The devious and remedial suggestions of one become the property of all, and all learn from competent instructors everything that the world has accumulated in the way of aid and amelioration for their condition.

"Certain very obvious advantages of such a scheme for aid to blind men will readily appear. The school plant with its equipment for training and labor is idle during the vacation period and can be utilized with no additional expense. The arrangements for housing and caring for the adult inmates are at hand with no additional cost. The only extra cost is for the additional teaching force required during the summer school period, and for the additional food and domestic service.

"Evidently no such amount of benefit can be bestowed with so small an outlay of money as in the method proposed."

Since no doubt a majority of the blind of the state have not had the benefit of training in a school for the blind, more emphasis should be placed upon the needs of this part of the blind population. Today there are about 1,200 blind persons in the state, whereas only 700 blind youth have been enrolled in the school for the blind since its beginning about 60 years ago. It would be fair to estimate that not more than 500 blind persons are now living in Minnesota who have received systematic training in a school for the blind, save what they have received in the summer school sessions. The records show that 230 blind men and women have availed themselves of the summer school since 1907. It is therefore apparent that there lies before us a large field for constructive and intelligent supervision of the blind in the state in their several activities and for the administration of aid, where necessary, with just discrimination. Dr. Dow again recognized this situation among the blind of the state and set about to remedy it by advocating and securing the passage of a law in 1913 establishing an agency for the blind, with all activities centered at the school, his thought being, if I have not been misinformed, that the centralization of the activities would prove the most effective way of ameliorating the existing conditions. However, on account of the school lying outside of the most populous center of the state and being somewhat removed from the official center of the state, and apparently on account of an inadequate administrative force, the agency was not most effective. Yet within very recent time a neighboring state has set up machinery at the state school for operating all of the state activities for the blind. There is, in my opinion, a serious objection to the plan of centralizing the work at the school in that it would center conflicting interests and militate against the school as such. If we hope to maintain the present standard of the school and keep the morale up to the point it deserves, we should not undertake to combine with the school the other activities of the state which have to do with the material things of life, the administration of which is frequently fraught with misunderstandings and strife. Realizing the inadequacy of the agency work in the state and the need of a more comprehensive law covering all state activities for the blind, in 1922 a commission consisting of 17 representative men and women of the state were appointed by the governor to set up a plan of operation of such activities. The present law was passed by the legislature of 1923 and soon after

the state department for the blind was organized and is now functioning. In the main, this department is organized with the idea of helping the blind to help themselves, which is the only sound principle of procedure. It seeks to encourage by substantial support blind men and women to prepare themselves by training to become self-supporting or as nearly self-supporting as is possible. It should be here said that credit should also be extended to the Department of Rehabilitation of the State Department of Education for advice, co-operation and financial aid in the training of the blind adults. While speaking of financial aid for the training outside the state school, I might state that in 1915, again through the efforts of Dr. Dow, a law was passed granting a maximum allowance of \$300.00 a year for maintenance for those graduates of the school pursuing higher educational courses in colleges within the state or at the state university.

Returning to the question of state aid for the blind it may be well to refer to the two systems that have prevailed in varying degree; namely, the aggregated method and the segregated method or individual method. In several European countries the aggregate method has been used with some satisfaction, but in this country we have few examples of the method being used successfully, perhaps the outstanding one being the home for blind men and women in Philadelphia. This is called the Workingmen's Home for the Blind, but the name taken literally might be misleading, for women who are wives of the men live here as well. The aggregate organization is simpler and the results more imposing than those from the individual method, and it was toward the establishment of such institutions that efforts in this country have been chiefly directed in the past. But that day has passed, as it has become evident that the aggregation of a defective class tends toward state pauperism. The pioneer of work for the blind in this country, Dr. S. G. Howe, was firmly convinced of the evils of the unnatural aggregation of defective classes. Aside from the general evils of aggregation, the necessary limitation of these homes to the inmates has tended to lessen public interest in them. The inmates as a result become nonentities in society outside the home.

The second method, that of segregation, is opposed to the artificial community of the blind. It favors needed aid to the individual either in the form of employment or in money to supplement his earnings to enable him to live in ordinary society in the natural way. This method is followed in most cities of any considerable size in this country where work for the blind is well organized and efficiently managed. This policy of aiding the individual where necessary, as determined by careful and discriminating investigation on the merits of his case, is the one to which the state of Minnesota is committed and, in my opinion, this is the only just and sane method of dealing with the question of relief for the adult blind. We must face the question of relief for the blind in one way or another, for the best available statistics show that about 16 to 18 per cent of the blind are self-supporting in the true sense of the term.

Most of the blind adults in the state are anxious to do what they can in their home communities to help themselves to a more independent status in society. With this idea in mind many of them are engaged in home

projects of various kinds, but on account of limited business experience most of these persons are unable to market their product. The school during the year closing in September, 1925, sold to these widely distributed blind persons raw materials to be made up in their homes to the amount of \$1,000.00 and finished products made at the school to the amount of \$2,000.00. These finished articles were purchased by them to be resold. Here is a field of activity that should receive more and better supervision than it has received in the past. If the adult blind, by the right kind of supervision and follow-up work, can be encouraged to do more work in their homes with expert advice in the marketing of their product the demand for financial relief from the state will, in my opinion, decline. Money expended by the state in thus giving constructive advice and supervision will be more wisely used than if the same amount of money were used in direct financial relief. The question of marketing the product of the blind is one of most vital importance. Many a blind person has given up in despair after being confronted with the great problem of marketing his finished product. This is one of the problems that must be solved in Minnesota before we can hope to go very far toward making the blind earners of income, the ideal toward which all constructive workers for the blind are striving. A neighboring state, with only about five times as many blind as we have in Minnesota, is expending in pensions almost forty times as much money and thereby creating a state-wide pauperism among its blind population. We do not need to expend so lavishly state money for the financial relief of the blind in order to secure the best results. In my opinion we do need funds sufficiently large in Minnesota to be able, with wise administration and just discrimination, to help the blind in the largest degree to become self-supporting and to be able to supplement their earnings with graduated amounts of money. In no other way, I believe, is it possible to maintain at the proper plane the morale of our blind citizens.

While the field of activity in behalf of the blind is somewhat limited on account of the comparatively small number of vocational opportunities for them, I believe we may, on the whole, feel encouraged. The work for the blind in Minnesota, while not so far advanced as the work in some of the eastern states, is, in my opinion, organized on a sound and sane basis, and I believe in a few years, with united support, will compare favorably with the work of any state in the Union. Let us unite and organize in such a way as to place Minnesota in the front rank!

Charles F. Hall, Children's Bureau: Mr. Chairman, I certainly enjoyed the paper which Mr. Vance has given to us. I can not discuss the work very well because personally I have not come in very close contact with the blind. In the Children's Bureau we have Mr. Tynan with us. He has had a great deal of actual experience in that line.

There are problems which Mr. Vance has brought to us which I was pleased to hear, especially as to the value of the summer school, what the summer school has been doing for the adult blind and the encouraging features connected with it which do so much to remove the feeling of depression and almost despair that must overcome persons who are thrown into that type of life after once having had sight.

I feel that this work is something which we need to study very carefully. Every one of us needs to lend a hand to still press on and achieve better standards of administration. We need to discover the practical needs of the blind. There should be no hesitancy on the part of the Board of Control or those in charge of this type of work in bringing to people who are without sight the utmost of benefits that can be obtained.

M. I. Tynan, Department for the Blind: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I fear there is not much more to be said. Mr. Vance has certainly covered the subject very thoroughly. However, there may be differences of opinion with reference to some certain methods of training; probably getting the same results, but, yet, we who are dealing with the adults in their homes day after day realize the limitations of opportunities for training.

The summer school is no doubt filling a very much needed place, yet the question occurs to me, What about the other ten months of the year? An adult goes to the summer school for ten weeks during the summer. We will say this is his first year. At the end of the first summer he hasn't learned anything well enough to go back to his place of residence, or his home, or the institution, no matter where it be, and carry on the work. We find that in the ten months of idleness he gets very much discouraged. It seems to me, though, that the summer school is doing good work, and it is now the only solution of the problem, yet we must eventually hope to find some way whereby we can give intensive training for a period of forty weeks in succession, instead of forty weeks covering a period of four years.

I feel very strongly that right now in the state of Minnesota we need, as much as anything, supervision in the home with reference to work being done there. I find that when blind people have been out of school for from one to ten years they do not progress with the times. They have a natural tendency to do a certain piece of work exactly as they did it ten years ago. The market has changed. What are we going to do about it? We must have supervising teachers out in the field all the time keeping these people up to date.

Then there is the marketing of the products of which Mr. Vance spoke. That is one of our serious problems. Last week I visited a young man down in the southern part of Minnesota who attended the school five years. He hasn't much initiative but he has some ability to make things himself, and he had certain articles to sell. If he had a place where he could sell those articles, he would be at least self-supporting.

I am so new in Minnesota that I feel that I am intruding in saying as much as I have. I really have not had an opportunity to study the situation as I hope to do, but I will say this, that I feel confident we are going to work out a satisfactory solution of this great problem. I thank you.

The Chairman: Mr. Stevenson.

Elwood A. Stevenson, School for the Deaf: Mr. Chairman, I am not able to add anything to Mr. Vance's paper. I feel that he has given us a valuable, instructive and very carefully planned address.

Perhaps to the layman the terms "blind" and "deaf" may convey similarity in education and in problems, but the two are directly opposite. The psychology, the mental makeup, the methods used in teaching, are entirely different. Asking me to discuss Mr. Vance's paper perhaps would be similar to having Mr. Vance discuss something about the deaf.

But I have had this experience with the deaf-blind: Usually when the deaf-blind child appears, the solution is to send that child to the School for the Deaf, because of the methods of instruction. In my experience, which has been greatly limited, I have found that the mental possibilities, the potentialities and mental attainment are greater with the deaf-blind mind than with either the blind or the deaf mind. In New York state I had occasion to teach eight deaf-blind pupils, and I found this to be the case, that the deaf-blind mind is far keener, more impressionistic, more receptive, more retentive than either the deaf or the blind mind.

To attempt to add anything to Mr. Vance's paper would be intruding. I feel that he has given us a very instructive paper, one that calls for cooperation in every way. I sympathize with Mr. Vance because we do have some things in common. I do not believe the ordinary layman understands anything about the blind or the deaf, and it is up to the men and women interested in the work, the State Board of Control and the various legislative sessions, to aid us to improve conditions of the blind and the deaf. Mr. Vance said that 16 per cent of the blind were able to take care of themselves after they left school. Their problem is greater than the problems confronting us, because, without any exaggeration, I can say that between 95 and 98 per cent of the deaf graduates are self-supporting; so you can see how far apart our problems are and how difficult it would be for me to discuss any part of Mr. Vance's paper.

The Chairman: Mr. Sullivan.

O. M. Sullivan, Division of Re-Education: Mr. Chairman, I feel something like Mr. Stevenson; I haven't a great deal to add.

Mr. Vance's paper was a splendid presentation of the subject. We of the Division of Re-Education have always appreciated the help that the School for the Blind has given, and we have appreciated the new department for the blind ever since that has been in existence.

We feel that the summer school has been a great help in many ways. Almost invariably, when we find an adult who has been blinded during the course of a year, in addition to whatever plan we make for him we recommend his attending the summer session of the School for the Blind. We feel that he can then orient himself to his world much better than he otherwise could.

I feel that the marketing problem is one of the great problems ahead of us. A great many of the blind are capable of turning out production at home, and if some suitable way could be found of disposing of the products, they could earn quite a bit in this way.

Another thought has occurred to me. In Minnesota we have not really been able to see what can be done in the way of factory occupations for the

blind. We have made a survey, which shows there are many possibilities along that line, but economic conditions have been such since that survey was made that many normal persons can not get employment, and it has been almost impossible to get employment for the blind in factories on that account. I feel that when conditions change sooner or later we shall find more of these factory positions for the blind.

A month or so ago I had a report from the field worker for the blind in Duluth that the survey we had made had resulted only recently in a job there for a blind person. One of the factories that was surveyed in Duluth was a wholesale grocery establishment, where they put up coffee in tins. It was found quite a feasible occupation for the blind and a placement has now been made in it. Results are very slow, but I think they will accumulate. If we can just keep our enthusiasm up and continue searching for new avenues for the blind, not just assuming that all of these things have been tried out, but constantly seeking new ones, I think the situation of the blind can be improved.

I just want to add one further word about the informal machinery that we have set up in Minnesota for dealing with blind cases. Every case is brought before a committee made up of persons interested in some activity for the blind. I think that is a splendid arrangement. We get the advice of all persons who have any contact with the blind, and call, in addition, expert social workers and sometimes experts of another sort to confer with us. That, too, is a slow process. It seems to take a great deal of deliberation to get the case of one blind person solved; but it is the sound way to go at it and we shall eventually produce sound results.

Mrs. Nathaniel McCarthy, Board of Visitors: How do you explain the fact that the mind of the deaf-blind child is keener than that of the blind or the deaf child?

Mr. Vance: I think it comes mostly from individual instruction. No doubt there are some mentally deficient deaf-blind children.

Mrs. McCarthy: Has any commission form for selling goods for the blind been tried? We have a shop in Minneapolis which has been very successful in disposing of work done by home workers. The commission would pay the overhead for a continuous place of selling.

Mr. Tynan: The Minneapolis Society for the Blind and the Mutual Aid Association of St. Paul and the Association for the Blind at Duluth allow us to do some of that sort of thing, but only in a small way. They sell the articles as they have the opportunity. They do not take any commission.

Mr. Vance: Miss Turner is our new worker among the blind. It would be nice to hear from her.

M. Ada Turner, State Department for the Blind: I think this is hardly fair, Mr. Vance. I came into the work in Minnesota only yesterday, and you will therefore appreciate of what great value Mr. Vance's paper is to me. We are great believers in co-operation, and this paper, with Mr.

Vance's viewpoint, is a splendid beginning for me. While I have had experience in work for the blind in a neighboring state, and also with the blinded ex-service men, I have a great deal to learn in this new field, and trust all departments will give me every possible assistance.

I hope to aid with placement and marketing, for in no better way can we gain the confidence of the blind than by being able to find positions and show them we can market their products. But whatever they do must be up to standard, A No. 1, for we must have only the best to give the public, and in order to accomplish this we need close supervision of the home work. I would call it, perhaps, sympathetic supervision of the work done in the home. Often I have said to the sister or wife of the blind person: "Why haven't you told him that his work is not up to standard?" The answer was they feared to hurt his feelings. The supervisor and home people must have the courage to show the person how to keep his work up to the best or the public is going to buy from sympathy and not on the merit of the work.

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